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ABSTRACT

This paper examines, within a framework of the world-system analysis, the process of the nationalization of education in Burma. As a significant part of the nationalist-socialist revolution launched to undermine foreign influences on the Burmese society in 1962, all schools in the country were nationalized and the curriculum "Burmanized." The paper describes the events leading up to the nationalization of schooling in Burma under General Ne Win's government (1962-88) as well as the deeper socio-cultural and historical factors that played a crucial role in the Burmese military regime's decision to nationalize schooling and knowledge. In particular, the paper examines whether Burma's nationalization policies entailed a radical response to capitalist development. A conclusion is that although the nationalization measures appear to be radical because of their inward-looking and isolationist nature, they were not very radical. It is true that they were taken as part of the revolution with the purpose of minimizing the influence of, and gradually severing the ties with, the capitalist world. However, paradoxically, they were carried out within the framework of the dominant paradigm of modernization, the ideology of which was spread with the development of capitalism. Furthermore, the concept of the nation-state was strictly adhered to by the nationalist-socialist leaders. (Two crucial concepts in the emergence of capitalist modern world system are the ideology of modernization and the concept of nation-state.) The educated nationalist continues to look for solutions for the country's problems solely within the dominant ideological framework, accepting the viability of the nation-state and modernization. Seen against this contradictory background, there is nothing truly radical about Burma's educational nationalization. Contains over 40 references. (LMI)

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The Nationalization of Education in Burma: A Radical Response to the Capitalist Development?

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The Nationalization of Education in Burma: A Radical Response to the Capitalist Development?

In the post-World War II period when many formerly colonized countries of Asia and Africa regained (political) independence from European colonial powers, national aspiration for economic development along Western lines sprung up. Education was eagerly looked to invariably as a vehicle for realizing the dream of political and economic development, technological advancement, and uplift of general well-being of millions of individuals, the dream long suppressed under alien (European) rule. One of the important tasks that the new leaders of the former colonial world took up seriously is decolonizing their societies in culture, economy, and polity. For those elements with strong Marxist orientations, formal (political) independence was not satisfactory enough--so long as national economy was in the hands of European or alien capitalists. Hence socialization of means of production as well as decolonization of formerly-colonized minds were in order. Marxist-inspired revolutions in many "Third World" nations attested to this line of political reasoning, which was then shared by the various leftist factions in Burma.

The purpose of the paper is to examine, within a framework of the world-system analysis, the process of the nationalization of education in Burma. As a significant part of the nationalist-socialist revolution launched to undermine foreign influences on the Burmese society in 1962, all schools in the country were nationlaized and the curriculum "Burmanized". In so doing, I will discuss not only the events leading up to the nationalization of schooling in Burma under General Ne Win's government (1962-88) but also the deeper socio-cultural and historical factors, that beyond doubt played a crucial role in the Burmese military regime's decision to nationalize schooling and knowledge. Finally, I attempt to address the issue: Was the educational nationalization a radical response to the capitalist development?

World-Systems Analysis

World-Systems Analysis with its stress on the transhistorical economic and social context of global affairs was developed originally by the sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) and has gained, although not without serious debates and criticisms, a considerable circulation in the field of social sciences.[1] It is, according to Wallerstein, "not a theory about the social world, or about part of it. It is a protest against the ways in which social scientific inquiry was structured for all of us at its inception in the middle of the nineteenth century....World-Systems analysis was born as moral, and in its broadest sense, political, protest" (Wallerstein, 1987: 309). It is in fact "a reinterpretation" of the capitalist development and inspired by the dependency theory (Chase-Dun, 1981).

Scholars using this World-Systems Analysis argue that there has emerged a modern (capitalist) world system over the past four centuries orignating in feudal Western Europe and expanding gradually outward and integrating vast geographical areas of the entire world for capitalist production (Chase-Dunn, 1981; Wallerstein, 1974, 1982, and 1990). These expansions that have taken place have been "a conscious process, utilizing military, political, and economic pressures of multiple kinds, and of course involving the overcoming of political resistances in the zones into which the geographic expansion was taking place (Wallerstein, 1990).

From this perspective, the modern world (and capitalist world economy) can be divided up into three areas, namely core, periphery, and semi-periphery[2], distinguishable on the basis of a single division of labor. Core areas are defined as those where the

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[1] Notably in educational studies in the US, John Meyer and his associates have utilized the world system approach in looking at the development and transformation of education in the world.
See Meyer, John et al (1979) National Development and the World System: Educational, Economic, and Political Change, 1950-1970. Chicago: The University of Chicago.

[2] The terms "core" and "periphery" have been around for a quarter of a century since their first appearance in the United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America in the late 1940's and early 1950's. See Wallerstein, Immanuel (1982) World-Systems Analysis: Theoretical and Interpretative Issues.pp.91-103. In Terrance Hopkins et al. (eds.) World-Systems Analysis: Theory and Methodology. Beverleys, CA: SAGE.

concentration of core production exists which is capital-intensive and uses skilled, high-wage labor. Peripheral areas are uniformly located in the Third World where the mode of production is labor intensive and utilizes low-wage labor often subject to extra-economic coercion. Semi-peripheral areas are those countries where a combination of core and peripheral types of production is utilized. For these world-system "theorists" capitalism as a mode of production "has always been 'imperialistic' in the sense that it constitutes a hierarchical division of labor between core areas and peripheral areas" (Chase-Dunn, 1981). From a world-system perspective, the establishment of this single division of labor with its global nature is one of the crucial features of the modern world politico-economic system which distinguishes it from the past historical systems. For while all historical systems are based on a division of labor, none that existed before the present one was "as complex, as extensive, as detailed, and as cohesive as that of the capitalist world-economy" (Wallerstein, 1990: p.35).

For analytical purposes, this modern world system can be divided up into three component sub-systems: the world economy, the world politico-military sub-system, and the world socio-political system (Bornschier, 1986). In the earlier phase of the evolution of this world system, the politico-military system generally had primacy over the emerging world economic system. With the gradual expansion of and institutionalization of the world economy, the relative weight of the politico-military system declined, having given way to emerging world economic forces. This world economy, however, needed to be supported by either political and military force of a normative consensus which could be reached through the socio-cultural system. All three of these work hand in hand in re-creating unequal relations among nation-states (Bornschier, 1986). Until the Second World War, diffusion of the socio-cultural values of the core countries was limited to the elite in the former colonial world.

Today this is no longer the case. Cultural diffusion has penetrated wider segments of the world population. Following W.W.II, the capitalist development was no longer the

result of various forms of coerced labor nor was it contingent upon the colonial state's ability to render non-white societies into markets with their colonized people as predominantly economic animals. This shift from politico-military to socio-cultural support of the world economic forces has had profound impacts on how influence and, arguably, control, is exerted on the peripheral nations. An integration which draws its support from the socio-cultural system through the diffusion of shared values results in less centralized and hence less conspicuous patterns of control. It is through the internalization of the core values that the world system has come to legitimate, sustain, and perpetuate its functioning (Bornschier, 1986: Wallerstein, 1990).

Later in his writings, Wallerstein, perhaps in response to the criticisms that little is said about the role culture in the capitalist development (Shannon, 1989), treats culture as "the ideological battleground of the modern world-system" (Wallerstein, 1990). For Wallerstein, in the development of a modern world system, there also emerges a modern world culture, which pressures individual states to adapt to the norms of the modern culture, with its emphasis on science, universal laws, rationality, and the concept of progress. Here it may be pointed out that in this process of incorporating[3] non-white areas of the world, there has existed, in the post-Enlightenment era, the polarization of cultures into two camps: non-Western and Western. Of course, Western culture(s) with its scientific and material development has come to be first portrayed and later viewed as the most modern, the most secular, the most "rational," and the most "advanced". Thus the notion that to be modern is to be *more* like Western societies and cultures. In this universalistic line of reasoning, all states can modernize and develop. The underdeveloped,

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[3] Wallerstein (1990) writes of this process thus: The functioning of this cycle (sometimes called 'long waves, sometimes Kondratieff cycles) is complex... One part...of this process is that, periodically, the capitalist world-economy has seen the need to expand the geographic boundaries of the system as a whole, thereby creatig new loci of production to participate in its axial division of labor. Over 400 years, these successive expansions have transformed the capitalist world-economy from a system located primarily in Europe to one that covers the entire globe. The successive expansions that have occured have been a conscious process, utilizing military, political, and economic pressures of multiple kinds, and of course involving the overcoming of political resistances in the zones into which the geographic expansion was taking place. We call this process "incorporation" (p.36).

so the argument goes, can develop "copying those who already have, that is, by adopting the universal culture of the modern world, with the assistance of those who are more advanced...(Wallerstein, 1990: p.49)." This has created the universal desirability of Western cultural practices including acquisition of scientific knowledge with its universal values and truths, and the acceptance of the guidance of those who have already reached the shores of modernity. In other words, there has developed a hierarchy of cultures, in which modernization and westernization has come to be portrayed and perceived to be coterminous, although this development has been not without problems.[4]

For Wallerstein, this process or "incorporation" of geographical areas, that took place not without political (and armed) resistance[5] on the part of those who were being incorporated in the history of colonial conquests by European powers, with their distinct cultures and traditions, raised a serious dilemma (for the populations of each successively incorporated zones): "should the transformations that were taking place in their zone be conceived as changes from a local and traditional 'culture' to a world-wide modern 'culture', or were these populations rather simply under the pressure to give up their 'culture' and adopt the Western imperialist power or powers? Was it, that is, a case of modernization or of Westernization? (p.36)"

Among other things, the above-mentioned dilemma has in many way contributed to the continued struggle between global forces and their indigenous counterparts. In the development of modern world economy and the inter-state system, there came into

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[4] The terms "world culture" "modern culture" "global village" etc. are misleading in and of themselves. What we are talking about is not the products of collective collaboration among various groups in the world. Rather the modern world culture with its easily recognizable European (in its broadest sense and hence including American) cultural practices was first imposed on the incoporated peripheralized societies and people. This imposition later took on the form of volantary acceptance of these (western) values, cultural practices, the consumption patterns, and aesthetic judgments by these non-European people. One needs not look harder to find a good example of the cultural hegemony or the alomost universally diffused "world", though recognizably European, cultural norms. In viturally all meetings of significance, be they cultural (i.e., educational and professional), business, or political, one sees a sea of almost uniformly dressed attendents in western suits. Even in the United Nations General Assembly meetings, whatever differences may be voiced, discussed, and debated in whatever different languages, one cannot fail to notice several givens: the unquestioned acceptance of the concept and viability of nation-state, the language of modernization and (economic) progess, and, of course, the world's uniform (i.e, suit and tie).

existence anti-systemic movements (i.e., movements to transform the system and at the same time the product of the system) such as nationalist and/ or socialist movements in the colonized areas in the 19th and 20th centuries (Wallerstein, 1982: 103).

It is against this conceptual background that I examine the historical development of educational nationalism of Burmese leadership which culminated in 1962 when the leftist-inspired nationalist soldiers launched a complete nationalization of formal schooling and Burmanization of school knowledge. I argue that the dilemma of responding simultaneously to increasingly strong, ideological and economic pressures which is of inter-national in nature and to societal (national) pressures rooted in the country's colonial history is crucial in understanding the processes of nationalization of education. With this note, I now turn to the case of Burma's educational nationalization. First, a discussion of the historical origins of the educational nationalization is in order.

Pre-colonial Period

Since the time of the first Burmese empire in 1044 AD, Burma, especially the dominant Burmese group,[6] had a good network of educational institutions in the form of Buddhist monasteries. The distinctive features of the indigenous education are as follows: education was predominantly a cultural endeavor as it was not tied to the economy although it served as recruiting places for royal service personnel; access to education was universal; female literacy was not uncommon[7]; not only Buddhist philosophy and way of life were taught but

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[5] Colonization is a major form in which the incorporation took place.

[6] Burma is a highly pluralist society with various indigenous ethnic and racial groups. The Burmans did have a well-developed educational institutions solely due to the adopted Buddhist tradition. The other groups with the exception of, of course Mon and Shan, lacked writing systems. Hence this was not the case among those indigenous communities.

[7] John Furnivall observed that literacy was far more widespread in Burma than in Britain in the early nineteenth century. See Furnivall, John (1956) Colonial Policy and Practice. New York: New York University.

also secular knowledge such as history, customary law, medicine, diplomacy, the art of government, literature, military strategies, linguistics, astrology, astronomy, and alchemy.[8]

In the educational history of Burma after her contacts with European colonial powers, missionaries by and large preceded, and thus paved the way for outside intervention (Furnivall, 1956: p.373). Even before the initial annexation of coastal areas of the kingdom by the British, there were already established Christian schools. The missionaries who came to administer the mercenaries from Portugal were responsible for the establishment of these schools and who considered education within their sphere (Ba, 1964: Kaung, 1930 and 1963).

In addition, the Burman kings had shown interests in the acquisition of technology from the European countries in the earlier intercourse with the Europeans. As early as the beginning part of the eighteenth century there were efforts on the part of the king to acquire teachers from Europe who could disseminate the knowledge of rational science since it was important to have science knowledge and science teachers and educators--if Burma was to become like Italy or any other country in Europe (Ba, 1964). However, the need to modernize the kingdom, along western lines, primarily in defense and administration, did not become pressing until toward the latter part of the last Konbaung Dynasty (1752-1885) when about half of the territories formerly included in the Burmese Kingdom were lost to the British after the defeat in two Anglo-Burmese Wars (1824-26 and 1852-53). Correspondingly, large scale attempts to modernize, were made in the late nineteenth century: the royal administration sent scores of Burmese students to India, England, France, and Italy to acquire the knowledge of science and technology,[9] which was to be imported back to Burma upon the return of these young Burmese students (Kyan, 1979). Books were imported from Europe. King Mindon gave both personal and financial

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[8] Buddhist monks made up the most educated segment of the society and rendered services needed by both the royal administration and the lay communities throughout the country. They were teachers, literati, counselors, diplomats, writers, cultural authority, alchemists, historians, legal experts, and so on.

[9] Even a small number, (four to be exact) of female students were sent to Europe, as early as the middle of the 19th century, to learn things Western.

support to missionaries to set up schools where English and science were to be part of the curriculum (Marks, 1917). There were a number of administrative reforms and research projects related to the production of weapons. Also other science and technological projects were carried out.[10] Suffice it to say, that prior to the fall of Burma, the merits of the acquisition of science and technology came to be accepted by the Burmese elite themselves and hence the desirability of the estalishment of modern schools along western lines.

Before any substantial results were generated out of these projects apparently designed to fend off the British colonial power by building a strong modern nation, the British used a dispute between the last Burmese King Thibaw and the British owned Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation as the pretext to declare war on Burma and annexed the country in January of 1886.[11]

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[10] These reformist measures were initiated by the outward-looking palace group headed by the king's brother, the Crown Prince Kanaung who made up the most liberal wing of the royal administration. These projects came to a halt after the bloody palace intrigue in 1878, in which the Crown Prince was assassinated.

[11] Of all the various intepretations by historians of Southeast Asian, the dominant view examplied in the works of the leading (British and American) scholars such as D.G.E. Hall, John F. Cady, and John S. Furnivall was that the annexation was ultimately motivated to curtail the French influence in Upper Burma, the fact, that, from the perspective of some British-Indian administrators, would make the British position in Lower (British) Burma intolerable. The other alternative view is put forth by Dorothy Woodman who argues the primacy of commercial interests in the British foreign policy initiatives in the case of Burma. Discounting the strategic dangers and of Burmese diplomatic initiatives and of French intrigues in Burma, Woodman in her study "The Making of Burma writes thus:
"The French were not in a position to risk an open conflict with Britain, however much they might have desired to extend their commercial influence in Burma. When, in November 1885, the British decided to annex Upper Burma, one of the convenient exuses was that France might get there first. This was not true, and the passages deliberately omitted from the Blue Book prove it. Most accounts of this period have been based on the Blue Book , and the state of the affairs has not been revealed" (pp.226-227). According to Woodman, it was the pressures from British commercial groups which pressed their pro-annexation view on high officials, from Chief Commissioner Bernard at Rangoon to Secretaries of State Kemberley and Randolph Churchill in London that ultimately succeeded in convincing the British administration to issue the "Go ahead" for the incorporation of Burma into the British empire (Woodman, 1962), and hence the opening up of Burma market in the emerging world economy. See Woodman, Dorothy (1962) The Making of Burma. London: The Cresset Press.

Colonial Period

The colonization of Burma (or forced incorporation into the emerging world economy) was a gradual process.[12] In this process, western schooling played a significant role as an instrument of changing the pre-capitalist societies and cultures. Martin Carnoy (1974) has argued in Education as Cultural Imperialism that the introduction and spread of western education was carried out in the very context of European colonialism and imperialism.

As in the case of other former colonial states, in Burma Western formal schooling as an education system was organized only after the country's encounter with the European colonial powers. In its attempts to develop a limited system of education in Burma for colonial purposes[13], the colonial government appointed an education officer whose task it was to set up a loose school structure within which the existing schools were to be incorporated and their curricula to be controlled to a degree through grants-in-aid. Monastic schools which were responsible for the widespread literacy among Burmese Buddhist populace were de-legitimized by the new structural arrangements.[14] These

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[12] The colonization of Burma was a gradual process which span over a period of 60 years. After three Anglo-Burmese wars (1824-26, 1854, and 1885) the country was annexed to the then British India, became a part of the British Empire, and was governed as a province of India.

[13] These include creation of a small group of local elites which would facilitate the commercial exploitationsof the country and maintenance of minimal political infrastructure in the colonized country, and the development of a class of cultural brokers who would be useful for maintaing the ideological control over the colonized people. This is relfected in the writings of the earlier British colonial authorities who had shaped the colonial educational policies in India, and by extension, in Burma. Macaulay, the British historian and polciy-maker, wrote in his "Minute on Education" published in 1835 that English education was hoped to produce "a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, in intellect". See Christian, John (1942) Modern Burma: A Survey of Political and Economic Development. Berkeley: University of California Press.

[14] To be fair to the earlier British educational polices, liberal administrators such as Arthur Phayre, envisioned the provision of education based on the pre-existing network of monastic educations so that the majority of the now colonized subjects would have access to modern (western) schools and curriculum. The Buddhist monk-teachers generally were adamant against adjusting their curriculum to the needs of the changing environments. Secular subjects such as geography, math, English were written off as "knowledges of the animals". See Than Tun, Dr. (1973) *Phat-sar-ok-tha-mai*. (History of Text Books) pp. 151-182. In Upper Burma Writer's Club (1973) *Naing-ngan-ta-ka sar-ok-hnit ah-htain-ah-hmat sar-tan-mya*. (International Book Year Commemorative Papers) Mandalay: People's Press.

schools were outside the government-recognized school structure and lost many of their students to new schools. Instead what emerged was the kind of educational caste system: European Code Schools for children of European parents one the one hand and Anglo-vernacular and Vernacular for the local children on the other. At the top of this educational hierarchy were European and English schools created for, and filled by almost exclusively, children of European merchants, administrators, and army personnels and English was the sole medium of instruction in these schools. They were established and run by the Christian missionaries of various denominations and received a considerable amount of grant-in- aid from the colonial government, as the curriculum there was endorsed by the Director of Deaprtment of Public Instruction. Gradually these schools opened their doors to children of local elites having made sure that the parents allowed their children to be anglicized.[15] But those who could afford to send their children were rather small in number. The lowest rung of the structure was occupied by vernacular schools where most people sent their children as the cost was minimal. Anglo-vernacular and English schools were established in towns and cities where commercial activies were carried out. In the mean time, the universally accessible monastic education began to degenerate because of the fact that they did not offer training in English, the knowledge of which became an absolute necessity in the new colonial social order (Aye Kyaw, 1970; Furnivall, 1956: Kaung, 1963). Consequently, the well-to-do, usually traders and government service employees from amongst the locals sent their children to these English language schools. While vernacular schools lingered under dismal conditions, as their curriculum did not offer much which would bring economic rewards like jobs, a majority of rural farmers

[15] Upon admission to these schools Burmese children were forced to adopt Christian names and parents had to acquiesce to the school's demand that Burmese Buddhist children be taught Christianity. See Mi Mi Khaing (1946) Burmese Family. Bombay: Longsman, Green. p. 96.

whose economic life under colonial rule progressively declined and who had to rely on their children's labour stopped sending their children to monastic schools.[16]

Earlier I have mentioned that in the closing years of the end of the Burman Kingdom, the royal administration sought to modernize the country. The aim of the administration's attempt to acquire modern scientific knowledge was to develop the country along western line and hence for collective purpose.[17] In contrast, the educational pursuit of Burmese elites under the British colonial rule was carried out with the view towards individual mobility in the colonial social order (Furnivall, 1956).

The transformation in the educational life of the country, now a British colony, was taking place at a period when Burmese colonial society began to disintegrate and her economy was expanding rapidly. Due to the deliberate policies of the colonial administration according to which the country was treated not as a society but rather as a market as yet to be opened and a virgin land "waiting" to be exploited, the British encouraged and even subsidized the immigration of Indian[18] and Chinese, the scale of which hitherto unknown in Burmese history for cheap labor for the emerging market, as Burma was (Furnivall, 1959). While Burma's economy was expanding with a rapid rate with its rice export from the Irrawady Delta, oil production from the upper Burma region,

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[16] Reflecting this new educational caste system, there developed internal stratification among the Burmese on the basis of the type of education one's parents could afford. The lowest level jobs were filled by the products of the vernacular schools while their English schools and Anglo-Vernacular school counterparts fared better in the colonial social order. In those days, children of a handful of privileged local elites taunted other Burmese students who could not afford English education using the then common couplet:
In-ga-laik-kyaung-thar Ah-kaung-zar (i.e., Sudents of English Schools are superior)
Hpon-gyi-kyaung-thar Thu-daung-zar (i.e, Students of monastic schools are mere beggars)
See Khin Yi. The Dobama Movement in Burma (1930-1938) p.6.

[17] The hunger for technology was consistently expressed by the indigenous elites since the early intercourse with the European power. The lack of provision of technical education was a source of discontent among these elites. U Kyaw Min who was among the first Burmese to be allowed in the Indian Civil Service (ICS) complained about the absence of science education in the colonial school curriculum. Kyaw Min (1945) wrote thus: "the education was purely literary and was not suited to the social and economic structure of the country.... There was only one institution in the whole country which catered for technical education (p.95)." See Kyaw Min (1945) The Burma We Love. Calcutta: India Book House.

[18] The influx of foreign immigrants, primarily from India, was 300,000 in 1918 only--the rate of which was surpassed only by immigration to New York. See Furnivall. Colonial Policy and Practice. pp.117-119.

teak and other forest products, and mining of rubies, and other precious stones, a great majority of the country's native population lived in increasingly poor conditions. A vivid description of colonial society was given by John Furnivall, who served in the British (Indian) Civil Service as a commissioner in Burma around 1910 and later became one of the most prolific and noted scholars of southeast Asia. Here it is instructive to quote Furnivall (1960) at length when he eloquently describes the consequences of the British policy of "develop (ing) the material resources of Burma by throwing it open for free enterprise to all the world on equal terms (p.20)" thus:

> This (the goal of British policy) multiplied sectoral diversity by attracting a host of inassimilable alien elements. As a result of free enterprise, industry and commerce and the scientific professions passed into the hands of foreigners, who also came to own much of the richest rice land. Instead of building up a national society the effect of the British rule was to call into existence a plural society comprising numerous groups living side by side, but separately and meeting only in the market place. Each racial group and sub-group depended on the others for the performance of its own special economics, but their economic interests were often antagonistic and they had no social life in common...
>
> In the plural society, dominated by economic forces, Burmans had no chance to adapt themselves to life in a larger world. Because industry, commerce and the scientific professions offered no opportunity for Burmans, the doors leading to the modern world were barred against them. Economic forces held sway even in the schools, as students were deterred from taking courses that led nowhere, such as the study of economics and natural science, two main pillars of all that is distinctively modern in the modern world. Thus, although foreign rule brought Burma into economic contact with a larger world, Burmans were halted at the threshhold, and could not learn to live in it. In some directions their horizon was not enlarged but narrowed, for cheap Indian labour and the import of foreigner goods restricted the range of their economic activities.
>
> Formerly social custom had restrained but had also protected them in their economic relations. But under foreign rule, western law and western schools were the chief agents of economic forces in breaking down the hedge of the custom. Even within the village the social ties of the community were unable to withstand the strain of competitive individualism. This process of social disintegration was expedited by the extension of central authority through the village system. The instictive human protest against the domination of social life by economic forces took shape during the century as nationalism, and nationalists, not unreasonably, tended to identify foreign rule with capitalism. Thus the growth of nationalism in association with antipathy to capitalism may be regarded as an effect of foreign rule,...(pp.22-3).

From the above description, it is clear Burmese society was rapidly being transformed into merely an addition to the emerging capitalist world.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that it was not just the British colonial policies which treated Burma as "the best unopened market" (Colquhoun, 1885)[19]

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[19] I borrowed this phrase from the book "Burma and the Burmans; or, "The Best Unopened Market in the World", which was published around the time Burma was fully annexed into the British Empire. In this,

but the earlier missionaries also perceived the country as a potential place for exploiting the country's natural resources, which were not yet tappd by the native population under Burmese rule due primarily to the lack of Western science and technology. The early missionaries looked upon the provision of this scientific knowledge as their duty besides converting the "heathen" Buddhist population. In a letter written by an Italian Catholic priest, by the name of Father S. Calchi, to the Superior General of his Order, Claudier Strada, in Italy, it is stated that "(t)his kingdom is full of mines of gold and silver, of precious stones, of tin, copper, lead, chemicals and every gift of God; but they are like hidden treasures, as these people do not know how to use for their benefit (Ba, 1964: p. 290)." According to this letter, the Burmese king also desired to have scientific knowledge so as to exploit the natural resouces in his kingdom (Ba, 1964). As mentioned earlier, this desire for knowledge of science and technology on the part of the Burmese Kings resulted in the establishment of the new western missionary school for the children in the capital city of Mandalay, most notably in the reign of King Mindon, the second last Burmese King (Marks, 1917).

There were important changes brought about by the colonial arrangements. First, schooling became *primarily* an economic activity as the knowledge of western schooling became an absolute necessity for the locals to land a job in the government or in commercial firms. Second, two processes, the hierarchization and commodification of school knowledge were in full swing. Third, positions for administrators and senior teachers were to be held, by law, only by English or those with anglo blood (Than Tun, 1973: p.174). Finally, literacy among the populace declined significantly as a result both of the declining role of the Buddhist Sangha and of the lack of interest in the matter by the colonial authorities. There were no longer Buddhist learning centers of any significant size and fame. Now the elites sent their children to England and Europe not only to pursue their

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information about economic potentials were presented. In this book, Colquhoun presented an elaborate discussion of the trading potentials in Burma. See Archibald R. Colquhoun (1885) Burma and the

studies but also to learn the western way of life[20]. In brief, Burma suffered doubly from the colonial educational policies; on the one hand, her indigenous educational life drastically degenerated under the British rule while on the other hand, not only did she come to be dependent on Britain and Europe for "higher" knowledge but also her elites began to accept the "inherent" superiority of the European culture with its universal merits.[21]

Before I conclude this section on the colonial period it is relevant to make a mention about the re-awakening of national consciousness among the Burmese. It was noted that in pre-colonial Burma, unlike in India, there had "developed what may be fairly be called a nation State, and possess a national consciousness" (Indian Statutary Commission, 1930: p.570: cited in Furnivall, 1956: p.17) and correspondingly the national spirit, generated out of the existence of the political unit with a common religion and a uniform social culture (Furnivall, 1956: p.17). The re-emergence of Burmese nationalism took the form of first religious and cultural revivalist movement which began as early as 1897 with the formation of *Sasana Noggaha Athin* (Mission Association) in Mandalay (Maung Maung, 1980: p.1). Later the nationalist movement became overtly anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist and staunchly anti-foreign. Connected with the rise of nationalism was the national school movement which was launched throughout the country in the 1920s with the aim of promoting the national cause, which was deliberately neglected by the colonial educational

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Burmans; or, "The Best Unopened Market in the World" London: Field and Tuer.

[20] In the famous novel *Shwe-pyi-soe*, U Latt, himself a western-educated civil servant, ridiculed the increasingly anglicized local elites and their adopted cultural practices. In a sub-plot in the novel, a young barrister named Maung Thaung Be, who was sent to England to join the prestigious English Bar, came back completely anglicised. Maung Thaung Be would not even see his parents without a prior appointment! As a cultural convert, he apparently has gone overboard. See Latt, U (1977) *Shwe-pyi-soe*. Rangoon. A good social and political analysis of literature in the colonial period is presented by Aung San Suu Kyi. See Aung San Suu Kyi (1987) Socio-Political Currents in Literature 1910-1940. pp.65-83. In The Burma Research Group (ed.) Burma and Japan: Basic Studies on Their Cultural and Social Structure. Osaka: The Burma Research Group.

[21] It can be argued that the inferiority complex or the slave mentality in the indigenous elites through schooling was by no means an accident. The often-quoted Maccaulay's educational policy dictates were largely responsible for the emergence of colonized consciousness among these more or less Anglicized urban elites. See footnote # 12. Also during the First World War, the colonial administration made attempts to use school for spreading 'the imperial idea' and 'to foster a sense of personal attachment to the King-Emperor' (Aye Kyaw, 1970: p.15; Furnivall, 1956: p.393; Than Tun, 1973:pp.174-175).

authorities (Burma Socialist Programme Party, 1970: pp.346-347; Aye Kyaw, 1970: pp.140-141).[22] The goals of the national school movement were: to use Burmese as the medium of instruction, to encourage translation of works written in English and use the translated versions as texts, to introduce subjects that were vital to national development such as science, economics. etc., to design curriculum which would equip the Burmese nationals with professional skills, to arouse nationalist sentiments, and to revive the Burmese language and culture. It was in the final phase of anti-colonial struggle that the younger and more radical elements of nationalist group embraced Marxist ideas (Nyunt-Han, 1971)[23]. For them, Marxism presented an acceptable explanation regarding the plight of the colonized society and served as a powerful ideological tool in their fight against colonial (i.e, capitalist) powers. The diffusion of Marxist ideas among a majority of Burmese nationalists, to a varying degree continued to play a critical role in independent Burma as this generation of nationalist leaders formed the core of Burma's ruling elites, both civilian and military, after independence. For these nationalists, capitalism and imperialism were coterminous; they were the two sides of the same coin. Conversely, nationalism and socialism came to be diffused in the course of Burma's struggle against British imperialism. These factors came to shape the political outlook of the young nationalists who became the leaders of independent Burma.

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[22] See Burma Socialist Programme Party (1970) *Amyo Tha Ne Hnint Amyo Tha Pyannya Ye Hlut Sha Hhmu Tha Mai Ah Kyin* (A Concise History of the National Day and the National Education Movement). Rangoon: Burma Socialist Programme Party. Particularly Chapter 4. pp.346-411. Also see U Aye Kyaw (1970) *Myanmar Naing-ngan Amyo Tha Pyannya Ye Thamai* (History of Burma's National Education). Rangoon: Pale-pan Sar-pe.

[23] Nyunt-Han lived through this period as a student at Rangoon University, the center for political activism, and mingled with the leading political leaders, such as Drs. Ba Han and Ba Maw, who introduced marxist ideas among the student activists including Ko Aung San and Ko Nu. See Norman Nyun-Han (1970) Burma's Experiment in Socialism. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. University of Colorado. Nyunt-Han's is by far the most comprehensive historical account of the spread of leftist ideas in Burma. He also analyzes comparatively various views of Burma's pre- and post-independence nationalist leaders and their movements.

Independence Period: The Civilian Rule (1948-1962)

Burma regained her independence in 1948 and thus ended the 120 years long colonial domination by a European power. Independent Burma *adopted* the British brand of parliament democracy system. In the meantime, her economy, now fully incorporated within the world system, continued to be influenced by both European firms and Chinese and Indian (local) capitalists. Even after the political control was ended, the European, especially British, cultural hegemony proved to be far more difficult to eradicate as the social-psychological impacts ran deep in the mindset of many a Burmese, particularly among the western-educated elites.[24] Invariably, they went through a significant degree of Anglicization and many of them were cut off psychologically and culturally from the bulk of the population that still lived and worked in rural areas and never had the chance to learn more than the rudiments of Burmese. While Burmese western-educated never went through the degree of Anglicization which their Indian counterparts did, their typically negative attitude toward Burmese culture, language, and society was indicative of the servitude of the mindset many of these elites had. Their cultural tastes and consumption styles were more akin to those of their European counterparts than their fellow people. English continued to be the commonly spoken language and remained the most prestigious in the country. Knowledge of English, for these elites, was more than a tool: it was an ornament, and the obvious symbol of modernity. Having a Burmese accent (speaking with "*Ngapi* accent" as we might say) was enough reason to be embarrassed.[25]

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[24] The (negative) psychological impacts on the colonized in colonial situations have been examined by a number of scholars, most noticeably Franz Fanon.

[25] Many of them, while successful in their careers as academicians and professionals, were pathetically ignorant of their own culture and history. The classic example is the case of Dr. Hla Myint. Dr. Hla Myint, one of the best known scholars in development economics in the world and former professor at Oxford and the London School of Economics, once told a student of Burmese society, who was researching on the intellectual history of the country, that "Burma has no original ideas worth studying." See E. Sarkisyanz (1965) Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. p.231. This is somewhat typical of many westerned Burmese elites which I have run into during my six year stay outside Burma, don't have much to say about our culture, society, and political and intellectual history.

Immediately after independence, although U Nu's civilian government tried its best to democratize schooling and "Burmanize"[26] school knowledge, a full scale nationalization of education was not on its agenda, mainly because of the civial strife which engulfed the new government (Government of the Union of Burma, 1953, 1954, 1956, and 1957: Kaung, 1956). Nevertheless, the quantitative expansion was achieved in education. As Burma suffered the large scale damages from the WWII due to the scorched earth policies of both the Allied and Japanese forces, the reconstruction of educational institutions had to be carried out by the government (GUB, 1953, 1954, 1956, 1957: Kaung, 1956). The government's ability to perform the educational reconstruction and nationalization works were further hampered by a number of serious factors such as a series of armed revolt from indigenous political groups, Kuomintang invasion in 1952, the lack of sufficient number of indigenous experts, and the fluctuations of prices in the capitalist world market . As a result, the government had to rely on foreign expertise and assistance while attempts were being made to develop a talent pool from amongst the Burmese nationals. There were teams of western experts in economics as well as social welfare matters, which included the provision and improvement of educational services.[27] A number of American and British foundations were allowed to operate. While the government's policies were nationalistic (and socialistic) in their tone, Nu's government in practice had to make compromises in national development projects and economic matters. In education, the caste of like system of the bygone colonial period continued to exist. The haves and the powerfulpreferred to send their children to Christian missionary and private schools, where students were

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[26] The Burmanization process which officially began with the restoration of Burma's independence is seen as contributing to the perpetuation of disunity in pluralistic Burmese society. Professor Silverstein, a scholar-activist, has pointed out the colonizing aspect (at least from the perspective of Burma's minorities) of this process, although he did not use the word "colonizing." See Josef Silverstein (1980) Burmese Politics: The Dilemma of National Unity. New Brunswick, New Jersy: Rutgers.pp.220-229. Also the findings from my interviews with minority students seem to confirm Silverstein's statement in that they all expressed dissatisfaction with the Burmanization policies of the successive Burmese governments, both civilian and military.

[27] I was told by a Burmese official that in one project for restructuring technical education there were a dozen foreign experts.

expected to learn a good dose of English (and western culture) since kindergarten. Education offered at government schools, where English was taught only at the fifth standard, was perceived to be inferior to that of mission and private schools. At the university level, English was retained as the medium of instruction--the fact that worked in favor of missionary school graduates over their govenment school counterparts. The liberal-arts curriculum continued to be the most popular, reflecting the colonial legacy, and the arts students far outnumbered their science counterparts (Nyi Nyi, 1978). Textbook publishing was primarily done in Europe. While English was no longer the official language of the country, many intetellectual and scholarly debates were carried out in English. Educational and cultural programs such as the British council's English language programs were in full swing. There were a number of joint programs between US universities and those of the country. Foreign embassies opened libraries and disseminated publications on various subjects. Many wealthy parents continued to send their children to universities in the West (Aung-Thwin, 1989).[28]

In the meantime, children from usually poor family background were not enrolled in school due to the fact that their parents were too poor to send their children in schools (Student Union-Rangoon District, 1954).

In the economic sector, Burma's economy continued to be heavily influenced by external factors such as fluctuations in prices of rice in the world market. While the colonial rule was ended formally and the administration was filled with more Burmese staff than before, the economy was largely dominated by the British, Chinese, and Indian capitalists and Burma continued to reply on foreign institutions, cultural and economic, and the presence of foreign experts and businesses (Steinberg, 1981).

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[28] Michael Aung-Thwin had a point when he argued for the case of indigenizing the cultural and educational life of the country, in the light of the development of the inferiority complex among many westernized Burmese elites of the time. But I must stress that I completely disagree with Aung-Thwin's view that Burma regained "true" independence in 1962 when General Ne Win launched his socialist revolution. See Micheal Aung-Thwin (1989) 1948 and Burma's Myth of Independence.pp.19-34. In Josef Silverstein (ed.)

This was the situation when the Revolutionary Council came to power in 1962 in a successful coup which ousted the parliament democracy government of Prime Minister U Nu.

Independence Period: Socialist Rule (1962-1988)[29]

Soon after their ascendency to power, the Revolutionary Council (hereafter the RC), announced the nationalization of all private business, owned by both indigenous and foreign capitalist. The economic nationalization was followed by a large scale social revolution, in which educational nationalization was a significant part. The position of the RC on nation building was clearly stated thus:

> In reconstructing the Union of Burma in accordance with the Burmese Way to Socialism after an all round deterioration, the Revolutionary Council took steps not only to change basically the political and economi spheres but also undertook measures to alter the thinking and social character of the Union citizens (BSPP, 1965: p.101).

The justification of the need for a social revolution is given in the following passage: "(t)he Union was dominated by the feudalists for over a thousand years, by the foreign imperialists for over a hundred years and was also dominated by the landlords and capitalists after it had attained independence. That is why the thinking and habits of the working people were suffused with the thinking and habits of the feudalists, imperialists, landlords and capitalists (p.101)."

The first step to be taken was to shield the Burmese society from incoming influences from the decadent capitalist world, dominated by the Western capitalist countries. In other words, the RC was bent on withdrawing from the capitalist world system, the functioning of which the country had little influence. Distrustful of the

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Independent Burma at Forty Years: Six Assessments. Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University.

[29] It is rather curious that in the three volume historical works on this period, written at the directives of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc), no single chapter or even a sub-section was devoted to the educational and cultural policies and measures undertaken as a significant part of the 1962 nationalist-socialist revolution. See Burma Historical Commission (1993) *Myanmar-naing-gan-ye sa-nit-pyaung-ka-la* (1962-1974). (Transitional Period in Burmese Politics). Volume I, II, and III. Rangoon: Universities Historical Research Division.

activities of the foreign foundations, invariably from the West, all foundations were ordered to leave the country, their educational programs terminated. Mission schools were nationalized. "To prevent the domination of foreign influence in books, magazines and journals (BSPP, 1965: p.104)," publication of materials relating to the Cold War were not allowed. The incoming flow of foreign newspapers, journals and magazines was considerably reduced and those admitted were carefully scrutinized before their dissemination. In addition, books, journals and magazines published locally were scrutinized to ensure that they too were "free from foreign domination". The libraries set up by diplomatic missions were ordered to shut down. The Law to Supervise Libraries, Museums and Exhibitions was promulgated in order to "supervise systematically on ideological and cultural lines the many libraries, museums and exhibitions...(p.105)." Furthermore, the RC monopolized the dissemination of news, foreign and domestic, by purchasing rights from foreign news agencies and setting up the News Agency Burma (p.106).

Under the sub-heading Prevention of Foreign Influence in the political report of the General Secretary of the Burma Socialist Programme Party, the measures taken in the cultural and educational fields were justified thus:

> Because the Union of Burma had fallen under the domination of the foreign imperialists and after independence it had followed the path of capitalists and land lords the influence of foreign capitalists was felt greatly in the political and economic spheres as well as in the social sphere...Hence, the Revolutionary Government removed the grip and influence of the foreign imperialists from the economic, political and social spheres (p.102).

The social situation which was dominated by such thinking was to be altered. In its efforts to eradicate "the thinking and habits of the feudalists, imperialists, landlords and capitalists," the RC looked to educational and cultural institutions.

In 1965, the Law on the Registration of Private Schools was enacted "in order to ensure for the construction of the socialist economy the equality of education for the children of the working people in state schools, the uniform implementation of the alteration of thinking in the country, to prevent the domination of foreign habits, customs,

ways of thought, opinions and culture which had infiltrated in many forms..." In the same year, 102 high schools and 27 middle schools were nationalized (p.118). In the view of the RC, the then existing education system was essentially the old educational system "patched over here and there" with its primary purpose of producing clerks and officers for the bureaucratic system of administration. In addition it lay "under the shadow of the foreign system which it had copied (BSPP, 1965: p.114)." The RC adopted an educational policy in line with the new ideology. In paragraph 17 (A) of the BSPP's policy announcement, it is stated:

> The RC is of the belief that the present system of education which does not support livelihood must be altered. A system of education which supports the livelihood and high moral conduct must be erected. Science must be given precedence. It must be directed towards creating the opportunity of every person to take up the basic education. Higher education must mainly be for those who have the ability for it, work for it, and can absorb it (114).

Unlike the previous systems, a government school system was set up and all schools came to be organized as a unitary system with its national curriculum for all students.

It is evident that the RC was intent on building a modern nation primarily drawing on indigenous sources. In line with the professedly socialist ideology with distinctively Burmeseness (BSPP special characteristics), the regime took highly anti-West measures. Professor Maung Maung Gyi, who was teaching there at the time of the RC's ascendency to power in 1962 describes the situation thus:

> (I)t was not so much a case of anti-Americanism as of opposition to Western culture. However, American institutions and programmes, being the largest in the country, felt the axe more poignantly than others when the Revolutionary Council made the decision as early as April 1962 to terminate the activities of the foreign private agencies such as the Asia Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Rockefeller Musuem project. The U.S. Information Library, the British Council, and the American Consulate at Mandalay were also ordered to be closed. These institutions were seen as centres of cultural neocolonialism, disseminating the evil influence of the 'decadent' West...At one point, an official request was made to stop a very popular Burmese programme of the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) beamed to the teenage population (p.12).

Another factor which deserves our attention is that the RC did not hold a very favorable attitude toward those who were "tainted with values from the 'decadent' West."

The propagandists of the RC, in their writings, strongly urged these western-educated elites to modify their values and outlooks in accordance with nationalist and socialist ideologies espoused by the RC's Burma Socialist Programme Party. State scholars were now sent to former socialist countries in Eastern Europe and the former USSR, clearly as an attempt to minimize cultural contacts with the capitalist West.

Not only did the RC make structural changes but also it brought about changes in curricular content. The new curricula for all schools were devised in accordance with nationalist-socialist ideology of the RC regime. Burmese was made the medium of instruction in schools. No foreigners were to continue to hold positions as teachers or administrators.[30] Regarding this Burmanization of the curriculum, Dr. Nyi Nyi, the deputy-minister of education, made repeated references to the colonial period during which Burmese language and culture was relegated to the status of a subject unworthy of serious studies and consequently was looked down upon by many westernized urban elites. Nyi Nyi (1976) stated that under the British rule when the University of Rangoon was first opened, Burmese was not taught as a worthy subject, let alone the establishment of Burmese department. Instead English was the sole medium for instruction. But as the nationalist sentiments grew, the people repeatedly demanded that Burmese be used as the medium up to the University.[31] Even during the successive Burmese governments after independence, the authorities had paid lip service to making Burmese the medium of

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[30] This was the complete reversal of the colonial policy in which principals and senior teachers were to be of British blood or at least half-blooded English.

[31] As a matter of fact, the cry for the Burmanization of intellectual and cultural life of the country was perhaps the loudest during the years of the *Dobama* (We Burman) Movement. The slogan of this powerful movement, in which many post-independence leaders played a leading role, is as follows:
Burma is Our Country
Burmese is Our Literature
Burmese is Our Language
Love Our Country
Cherish Our Literature
Uphold Our Language
See Khin Yi The Dobama Movement in Burma (1930-1938), p.5.

instruction and it never materialized (Nyi Nyi, 1978: pp.29-31)[32]. In an interview with Forward magazine, Nyi Nyi gave several reasons for the education ministry's decision to use the medium of instruction. He referred to the colonizing aspects of using English as the medium in schools.[33] Nyi Nyi (1978) thus:

> Another reason for using Burmese in school textbooks and as language of instruction was that it will enhance foster spirit of self-reliance (in students). Because we all lived as slaves (under the British) for over a hundred years, there is still left quite a bit of slave mentality. We tend to thik highly of foreign language, foreign literature, and foreign culture while we looked down upon our own products and our own culture. This has led to the development of inferiority complex. And that is a major damage to our nationals (p.51).

Also the use of Burmese language for curricular and instructional purposes was defended on the ground that the access to knowledge was being democratized. For "as long as a subject is not taught in indigenous language, it will never reach the masses. Instead it will remain the property of a handful of individuals (Nyi Nyi, 1978: p.52)."[34]

All these measures were taken along with nationlization of virtually all businesses, owned by both indigenous and foreign capitalists and socialization of the means of

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[32] To be sure, immediately after independence, the process of nationalization was begun in Burma. But the parliament democracy government of U Nu was severely constrained in its ability to launch large scale nationalisation parallel to the one undertaken by the Revolutionary Council government of General Ne Win. It was engulfed in a series of armed revolts by the two factions of communists and separatist minorities such as the Karens. Also the lack of a sufficient number of skilled personnel coupled with the enormous task of re-building the country's economy which was severely damaged by the World War II, further incapicitated the Nu's government to pursue complete nationalization of cultural and economic actvities.

[33] The issue of national language versus the old colonial language in the post-colonial world order is not uniqe to Burma. A prominent work on this issue is written by the celebrated African writer Ngu~gi~ Wa Thiong'o. See Ngu~gi~ Wa Thiong'o (1986) Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature. London: James Currey.

[34] A completely different view was held by Dr. Hla Myint, who served as the Rector of Rangoon University in 1959. Dr. Hla Myint was the strongest opponent of dropping English from the curriculum as the medium of instruction. Also he opposed the expansion of university education as he was more concerned about the quality of education rather than its quantitative expansion, i.e., democratization of school knowledge. He proposed the continuation of educational caste system, making frequent references to Oxford, where he taught. He lost the battle against keeping the old system intact. To be fair to him, perhaps, he was more dispassionate than his counterparts in the opposite camp. But the unleashed educational aspirations of people proved too strong to be held back after independence. This was, and has been, a typical problem which many new nations encountered during the period following foral independence. See New Burma Weekly (1959) An Interview with Dr. Hla Myint. New Burma Weekly. V. 4: #1. Also see Maung Kyaung Thar (1959-60) *Myanmar Lo Pyinnya Thin Kya Gyin* (Teaching in Burmese language). Rangoon University Annual Magazine.pp.159-160.

production. In the political sphere, the Revolutionary Council also dissolved the parliamentary "beacuse Parliament had not worked in the interests of the working people of the Union of Burma (BSPP, 1965: p.33)." In the view of the new leaders, it was "a bourgeois Parliament which represented the interests of the feudal elements, exploiting landlords, national (i.e., indigenous) and foreign capitalists who wielded their influence on public affairs, bureaucrats, political and economic opportunists who acknowledged their allegiance to such capitalists, sharers of spoils, and such people (BSPP, 1965: p.33)."

On April 30, 1962, The RC issued the proclamation of the Burmese Way to Socialism, its policy statement, and adopted its philosophy, which was later published in a book entitled The System of Correlation of Man and his Environment at the 22nd meeting of the RC. In essence, the RC's documents openly stated its plan to reconstruct Burmese society from indigenous sources devoid of capitalist influences and build a new socialist economy. Accordingly, means of production such as agricultural and industrial production, distribution, transportation, communications, external trade, etc were socialized (BSPP, 1965: p.64). As early as February 23, 1963, thirty one foreign and domestic banks were nationalized. In place of a mixed economy which existed under the parliament democracy government, plans were made to build a full-fledged socialist economy, the fruits of which were to be shared among the Burmese nationals. In this the nationalist (socialistic) state, not the capitalists, foreign and indigenous, was to be the arbiter, of economic redistribution.

So far I have traced the historical origins of the nationalization of education which was undertaken as a part of a large scale socialist revolution of 1962. From a world system perspective, socialist revolutions motivated by strong anti-foreign, anti-capitalist, and anti-capitalist sentiments commonly shared by many nationalists are considered as anti-systemic projects which attempted to withdraw from and dismantle the global capitalist order in which these third world nations occupied invariably in the periphery. In the case of Burma, the country was gradually incorporated into the emerging capitalist world economy

for the past two centuries. In the course of this development, Burma was treated as an economic entity with her abundant natural resources and fertile soil for agricultural development and gradually came to be peripheralized. Correspondingly, the economic life of the country developed along capitalist lines, supplying the needed raw materials for the core countries, of which her former colonizer, Britain was one. As discussed earlier in the paper, in Burma the western educational institutions were implanted largely by the colonial power for the purpose of facilitating the colonial administration and the commercial activities. Accordingly, the colonial education was designed for the limited purpose of training a small number of local elite for administrative and commercial activities of the British. It is then to be expected that the colonial education did not equip the indigenous people with knowledge needed to function in the emerging modern world system, while the country was being thrown into it.

As has been argued in this paper, over the past two centuries Burmese society came to be fully drawn into the emerging capitalist world economy. During this long process of incorporation, particularly after the dissolution of formal colonial empires, the socio-cultural system of the capitalist global order has come to play a greater role in that the politico-military support of the economic forces (of the capitalist colonial world order) gave way to the socio-cultural support in aiding the development of continued capitalist development (Bornschier, 1986; Wallerstein, 1990). The shared values which are in support of capitalist development come to be diffused in the so-called post-colonial (capitalist) world. It is in this connection, education and various cultural institutions have come to play a crucial role.

As indicated by the experience of independent Burma in the parliament democracy period, there was the continued influence of Western cultural and educational institutions, which shaped, to a considerable degree, many elite circles in the so-called third world. Phil Altbach (1989) has pointed out this intellectual and cultural dependency. Altbach (1987, 1989) argues that in the 20th century, there developed an international network that is

dominated by a handful of western industrialized nations such as the United States, Britain, France, and, to a less extent, West Germany. In this network, the production and dissemination of knowledge have been heavily in the hands of these nations where there is a high concentration of research and development centers and educational institutions. These capitalist nations have been in a position to pour money, which they accumulated in the colonial and post-colonial eras, into these knowledge factories (Altbach, 1989). They thus "dominate the systems which distribute knowledge; they control publishing houses and produce scholarly journals, magazines, films, and television programs which the rest of the world consumes. Other countries, especially in the Third World, are at the periphery of the international intellectual system (Altbach, 1987: p.17)."

Furthermore, many students from the Third World study abroad in these core intellectuals centers where they get exposed to dominant systems of thought, of which the ideology of modernization is one. These future political elites became one important channel through which the dominant cultures and ideologies get diffused in the thrid world. This holds true in the case of Burma. Through the training of indigenous elites and through their cultural and educational programs foundations such as the Ford Foundation have played a critical role in the diffusion of the dominant cultural norms and dispositions in the peripheries (Berman, 1984).

In addition to the economically peripheral role that Burma had to play in the world context, her westernized elites, as repeatedly argued earlier, suffered from cultural neocolonialism as many of them with their pro-capitalist and -west outlooks got increasingly cut off from their more tradition-bound economically destitute people (Aye Kyaw, 1995). The cultural and educational servility manifest in the behaviors of many westernized elites and the domination of the country's economy by foreign capitalists were among the reasons given for the 1962 socialist-nationalist revolution in which the educational nationalization was a significant part.

Indeed, the initiators of Burma's socialist revolution did try to withdraw from the capitalist world order both economically and culturally while maintaining a minimal political contact with dominant capitalist societies.[35] From a world system perspective, this may be interpreted as the reaction of a peripheralized society such as Burma to the world system which overpowered the then new indepedent nation in its functioning. Using colonial Bengal as an example, Partha Chatterjee (1993) has argued that in the colonial situation the colonized made attempts to reclaim their independence in the (cultural and) spritual domain[36] before anti-colonialist nationalist movement began to take shape as a political movement. In so doing, the Bengali nationalists tried to shield their educational and cultural life from the overwhelming influences of, and intervention by, the colonial state so that the national culture that was "modern" and yet non-Western could be imagined. This appears to hold true for the independent Burma under the Revolutionary Council government when it tried to reclaim the cultural indepedence through nationalization of schooling and Burmanization of cultural and educational life of the country.

The educational nationalization of 1962 did not come from nowhere; it has its roots in the colonial period in which Burmese culture, language, and indigenous systems of thought came to be placed in the emerging hierachy of various types of knowledge. The anti-systemic nationalist movements which initially took the form of the re-assertion of one's national identity, language, and culture, as I have pointed out in the discussion of the national education movement in the 1920s and the *Do-bama* (We Burman) movement in the 1930s. Hence the nationalization of education in 1962 along with other radical

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[35] There appeared to be two exceptions to this argument as Burma under General Ne Win's reign had substantial contact with former West Germany and Japan.

[36] The Bengali political theorist Partha Chatterjee argues that "anticolonialism creates its own domain of soverignty within colonial society". And this is accomplished well before it launched its political battle against imperial power and by means of splitting the world of social institutions and practices into the material and spritual domains. The material domain is considered the domain of the"outside". It is the domain of the economy, of the statecraft, of science and technology and here the West had proved to be superior. Hence in this domain, the East succumbed to the Western superiority. While this is the case, the spritual is an "inner" domain where the "essential" marks of cultural identity lay.

measures must be contextualized in the country's colonial history in the course of which Burma became *forcibly* incorporated into the emerging world system.

Were these nationalization policies a radical response to the capitalist development? Although the nationalization measures might appear, at first glance, radical regarding their inward-looking and isolationist nature, in the final analysis they were not that radical. It is true that these measures were taken as part of the revolution with the purpose of minimizing the influence of, and gradually severing the ties with, the capitalist world. But when carefully examined, they were carried out within the framework of the dominant paradigm of modernization (and science) the ideology of which spread within the context of the development of capitalism. Furthermore, the concept of the nation-state (and its concomitant inter-state system) was strictly adhered to by the nationalist-socialist leaders. It is crucial that an emphasis be placed on the role these two concepts (i.e., the ideology of modernization and the concept of nation-state) in the emergence of capitalist modern world system. From a historical perspective, the tremendous pressure to modernize the pre-colonial Burmese society along Western lines was greatly felt by the Burmese elite after the country's initial encounter with the European powers. The superiority of the British colonial power's military might was the deciding factor which posed the imminent threat to Burma's soveringty. This naturally induced the need in the minds of the Burmese pre-colonial elite for the importation of science and technology from the West. As described earlier, the Burman kings suppported the establishment of schools along Western lines. In addition, as late as the middle of the 19th century, the reformist elements among the Burman elite made serious attempts to bring about administrative changes in political spheres, when a vision of the constitutional monarchy, obviously modelled after Britain, was formulated by these elite. For these modernization purposes, the pre-colonial elite looked to the newly implanted schools to disseminate new forms of knowledge while having sent Burmese students to Europe to train in science and technology. In other words, the ideology of modernization came to be accepted as the only viable option left for

the pre-colonial Burma after the two major defeats in the two colonial wars against the British colonial power. In order to retain her soverignty, Burma had to modernize. As seen in the paper, this was not to be so, when the British decided to annex the country in 1885 and thereby precluding the successful completion of the project of modenization which had just begun.

Although the project of modernization both in political and economic spheres failed to materialize, the concept had already taken roots in the mindset of the Burmese elite. The themes and goals of the nationalist movements, particularly in the later phase, clearly indicated the unquestioned acceptance of this modernization ideology. Politically the independent Burmese state was to be a nation-state while its economy was to be industrialized. In other words, the options for the nationalists were already formulated first during the initial encounter with the European powers and later through the colonial experiences, that included schooling.

Likewise, the successive governments of independent Burma, although different in their formulation of the state policies, the ideological paradigm within which they attempted to steer the country's destiny was indeed the same in the final analysis. Upon a closer examination, one can not fail to notice the highly contradictory nature of the educational nationalization by the Revolutionary Council in the early 1960s: on the one hand these policies were designed as a part and parcel of the project of building a nation-state based upon indigenous sources, while on the other hand they adhered to the ideological framework that was imposed upon them by the colonial powers in the first place. There is no need for further elaboration of the fact that this almost universally accepted ideological framework or the dominant socio-cultural system has been one of the major contributing factors for the emergence of capitalist world order. In this task of dissemitaion of, and legitimization of, this ideological framework, the schools have proven to be one of the most effective institutions. Despite the curricular and structural changes which were brought about in Burma's education under the Revolutionary Council rule, the schools in Burma

continued to inculcate the same "Let's modernize our nation" ideology, albeit along different paths. The dominant paradigm which supported the colonial global order and which has been instrumental in the development of capitalist world system remain unchallenged in any significant ways. The educated nationalist with his or her modern predispositions contiues to look for solutions for the country's problems *solely* within the dominant ideological framework, accepting the viability of the ideas of the nation-state and modernization. If indeed the task of nation building is a task to be "immagined" by individual soverign states, then that imagination seems to have already been carried out in the last few centuries, and by the Western colonial powers, having deprived those states of the opportunity to "imagine" their own communities! And in this nation-building task, the Revolutionary Council government of Burma assigned the schools in Burma with their Western ideological roots the impossible task of instilling the negative attitude toward the global social order while, paradoxically, teaching them the "universal" desirability of modernization and legitimizing the idea of an inter-state system, that is the modern capitalist world system. Seen against this background, there is nothing*truly* radical about Burma's educational nationalization.

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